

March 04, 2013

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Reminder: Use Caution When Using Alternative Heating**

A close call one morning last week was a good reminder for residents to be vigilant when using alternative heating. Springfield firefighters responded to a house fire on South Nettleton just before 5 a.m. Thursday. A resident woke up to the sound of her smoke alarm sounding and saw flames coming from the kerosene heater in the living room. She tried to move the heater out the front door, but was unable to get it over the threshold of the front door. When the heater hit the threshold it tipped and spilled fuel causing the fire to intensify. Two adult residents and two children were able to escape through the bedroom window and firefighters were able to quickly get the fire under control. The resident told investigators she had filled the kerosene heater with gasoline, which caused the fire.

Alternative heating sources are not inherently a greater fire risk. With caution they can be used safely. That's why the Springfield Fire Department is encouraging residents using kerosene heaters, pellet stoves, wood stoves, space heaters or any other supplemental home heating equipment this winter to follow this advice:

#### **Portable electric space heaters**

- Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Use and purchase portable space heaters with an auto shut off so if they're tipped over they will shut off.
- Place space heaters on solid, flat surface at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn.

#### **Fuel-burning heaters**

- Always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, allow the appliance to cool and refuel outside.
- If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback.

#### **Wood and pellet-burning stoves**

- Wood stoves should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the live fire.

Also, make sure your home has smoke alarms on every level, outside each sleeping area and inside every bedroom and test them monthly to be sure they are working. Plan and practice your home fire escape drill. And, please install carbon monoxide alarms in your home to protect your family from this silent killer. Please join the Springfield Fire Department in ensuring that our community is safe from heating fires this winter.

For more information, contact: Fire and Life Safety Educator Cara Restelli Erwin, (417) 864-1699.